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Refugee Reports

A News Service of the U.S. Committee for Refugees
1025 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 920 Washington, DC 20005 (202) 347-3507

Volume XI, Number 2 February 23, 1990

INSUFFICIENT AID, INCREASED FIGHTING FURTHER THREATEN FAMINE-STRICKEN NORTHERN ETHIOPIANS

[On February 6, Refugee Reports staff writer Hiram A. Ruiz returned from a three-week site visit to Eritrea. He was part of an InterAction fact-finding team that traveled to areas under the control of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) to assess the severity of the famine there, the relief effort, and the potential for large-scale population displacement.]

Barren Fields Eritrea, a rocky and mountainous province of northern Ethiopia, even without drought depends on international food aid for 30 to 40 percent of its annual food requirement. Eritrea does have some potentially good farmland, but as we drove deeper into the region, the full impact of last year's drought became evident. Fields were dry, dusty, barren. The dried-out stubble of failed crops was all we could see. In six days of driving through Eritrea, only once did we see anything growing, and that was a small plot cultivated by the students of a secondary school, who irrigated the plots manually, carrying water from a nearby stream. "Crop production in 1989 was only 20 percent of that in 1988," an Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) official told us. "That's only enough to feed the country for two months."

The Initial Response Unlike 1984-85, when the Ethiopian government withheld information about the famine until it was too late, this time the international community has known of the potential for renewed famine for many months. A famine early-warning system now in place raised the alert as soon as last year's rains failed, causing widespread drought and crop losses throughout much of northern Ethiopia. Soon after, ERA and Relief Society of Tigray (REST) officials--and later the Ethiopian government (through the UN)--began asking for increased international aid.

The international community--the United States in particular--has responded, and more than a third of the food needed has been pledged or is on its way. But much of it has gone to where it is least needed. Three out of every four people at risk live in areas controlled by the EPLF, the Tigray People's Liberation

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Famine once again threatens the people of northern Ethiopia. If more food aid does not reach them soon, they may leave their villages on a dangerous trek in search of food. Refugee Reports visited Eritrea to assess their condition first-hand.....1

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"As we drove deeper into the region, the full impact of the drought was evident. Fields were dry, dusty, barren. The dried-out stubble of failed crops was all we could see." *Photo credit: USCR/Hiram A. Ruiz*

Front (TPLF), and other nongovernment forces, yet the vast majority of food aid has gone to the few areas of northern Ethiopia still under government control. In January, warehouses for ERA and REST--which deliver and distribute food aid to EPLF and TPLF-held areas respectively--were empty.

At least for the people of Eritrea and Tigray there are systems in place to attempt to respond to their needs. The 1.5 million residents of drought-affected areas of Wello under rebel control have no such system. Continued fighting near their home areas will make it difficult for them to cross into food distribution points in government areas, and many could migrate into Tigray in search of food.

I Prefer to Die on My Own Land The team interviewed a number of farmers and other Eritreans in their home villages. We sought information on their food production during 1989, the extent to which they were already dependent on food aid, how they viewed food availability during the coming months, and what steps they would take if food was not forthcoming in their home villages.

At a small village in the Zara area, we met a group of sedentary pastoralists, who live in their village year-round and do some farming, but mainly depend on their livestock. They told us that they had not been able to grow any crops at all. Worse yet--for people whose livestock are their livelihood--there was little grass and not enough water for their animals. "We have to take our animals a long way for fresh grass now," one man told us. Asked how he planned to cope with the situation, he told us: "We will look for anything we can find to feed them, like cutting from the top of trees. The last thing we will have to do is to sell them."

Most of the farmers in the village are already dependent on food aid. "When we wake up in the morning, we hope that ERA will call us for food distribution that day," one farmer told us. "When we go to bed at night, we hope they will call us the next day." If there is not enough food from ERA, would they leave, we asked? "We don't leave our land. This is our home. If worse

comes to worse, we will eat our animals. But we won't go to Sudan. We would try to get by here."

In the village of Erota, on a normally fertile but now barren plateau high atop the mountains, we met 80-year-old Ali Muse. Muse said that he had not received any food aid yet, because until recently he had food stocks from previous years. But now that has ended and, until he can get food from ERA, he is selling some of his goats in order to buy it. "Before, I had 5 camels, 10-15 cows, and other animals--but that was in the past. I don't like to think about what is past," Muse told us. Several of Muse's relatives left Erota during the 1984-85 famine and are still living in Sudan. We asked him if he would join his relatives in Sudan if he couldn't get food in the village. "Me? 'Wallahi!' First of all, I'm not as strong as the others, so I can't go to that place. Second of all, I prefer to die on my own land."

Problems Associated with Mass Migrations

One of the lessons that the international community learned from the 1984-85 Ethiopian famine is that large-scale population displacement is a major reason for high rates of serious illness and death. People often do not leave their villages and homes until they are already out of food and in a weakened physical condition. The trek across inhospitable terrain--for days or sometimes weeks--in search of food further weakens them. Many die en route. Others who arrive at food distribution centers or refugee camps are too weak or ill to be able to eat the food that they find, and they also die. Those who survive the trek must face the many diseases and epidemics that are rampant when massive populations are thrust together in one place, often without an adequate water supply, basic sanitation, or enough food.

ERA does not want to see mass migrations of people in search of food, and their relief effort is directed towards that. They have set up 40 food distribution points within Eritrea, and estimate that all Eritreans are within a three-day walk of a food distribution point. According to ERA's Gebremichael Mengistu, while ERA's ability to respond to the current crisis is significantly higher than in 1984-85, they need more trucks and food in order to distribute food to all those in need in their own villages.

At present, it seems possible for people in Eritrea to be able to remain in their villages until mid-April, when the planting season begins. If that is the case, and they can be provided with seeds to plant, if at least a survival level of food can be distributed through the rainy season, and if the rains come and the crops grow, most Eritreans are likely to remain in their homes. But those are a lot of "ifs"--and time is running short.

"The rainy season is the hungry season--yet it's when our transport capacity is at its lowest, because roads become impassable," said Mengistu. "That's why we

Although 80 year-old Ali Muse has several relatives living in refugee camps in Sudan, he said that he wouldn't go there, even if he had no food. "I prefer to die on my own land," he told Refugee Reports.

Photo credit: USCR/Hiram A. Ruiz

need to get maximum food coming in now, before the rains." If aid is not forthcoming, Mengistu added, "definitely some people would be forced to leave their home villages." Should that happen, ERA reportedly has made some contingency plans for those who become displaced within Eritrea.

Intensified Fighting Disrupts Food Delivery Another "if" looms on the negative side--in recent weeks, fighting in the region has escalated. In mid-February, the EPLF has launched a major assault on Massawa, a government-held port through which most food aid to government-held areas enters. The attack has shut down the port, and some of the food that was stored there has reportedly been destroyed. How this intensification of the war in Eritrea will affect the food distribution process throughout the region remains to be seen.

Fighting has also been an important factor in Tigray, where the TPLF has driven government forces completely out of the province. Eastern Tigray was severely affected by the drought. There is little if any food there. Western Tigray, however, has some food surpluses, and it is possible that Tigrayans from the east may move to those areas. Whether they remain in Tigray rather than continue on to Sudan will, however, will depend on the extent to which REST has the resources to assist those who become displaced within Tigray. A possible indicator of what is to come: a recent report from the World Food Program stated that 5,000 Tigrayans have moved into the Senafe area of Eritrea, and 3,000 others into the Adi Quala area, in search of food.

Migrating to Sudan In 1984-85, hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians made their way to existing refugee camps in Sudan. Most returned home after the famine. Although ERA and REST would prefer that any large-scale displacement be contained within Eritrea and Tigray, migrating to Sudan may remain an option for many people. But the situation in Sudan is much changed from 1984-85, and this could be a very bad time for victims of the famine to go there. Already, Ethiopian refugees in Sudan are suffering due to the serious funding crisis that UNHCR is experiencing. Malnutrition rates have gone up and food distribution has been uneven. Several private agencies that assisted refugees in the camps are pulling out of Sudan because of difficulties they have met with the Sudanese government. [See related story, p. 6.]

Because of its funding crisis, UNHCR is not able to prepare for a potential but uncertain influx from Ethiopia. If there is an influx, UNHCR officials in Khartoum told us, the organization would have to appeal to the international community for assis-

In late January, ERA and REST's warehouses were empty. The only commodities to be seen were a small amount of grain, and several hundred cans of vegetable oil, seen above being loaded for delivery to food distribution points in Eritrea.

Photo credit: USCR/Hiram A. Ruiz

tance--but their response might take time, while UNHCR's response to the influx would have to be immediate.

The attention of the military government of Sudan (which took power in a June 1989 coup) is focused on the war in the south. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) recently launched a major offensive, attempting to gain control of the main government-held towns in the south. It is feared that the intensified fighting, and the suspension of Operation Lifeline Sudan--the UN-sponsored relief program that was delivering food to the beleaguered civilian population of southern Sudan--may contribute to renewed famine in southern Sudan.

It is thus quite unlikely, most analysts agree, that the Sudanese government would welcome a new influx of famine victims from Ethiopia--and that appears well-known within Eritrea. Many of the Eritreans we spoke to cited the problems in Sudan as one of the reasons they would not go there.

Recent Developments

HUNGER COMMITTEE LOOKS AT THIRD WORLD REFUGEE CRISIS

On February 8, the House Select Committee on Hunger held a hearing on "The Crisis of Third World Refugees," featuring government witnesses, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR), and former long-term camp inhabitants from Cambodia and Ethiopia.

Rep. Tony P. Hall (D-Ohio), the new chairman of the committee since the tragic death of Rep. Mickey Leland, opened the hearing by saying that the current refugee crisis is the result of continual growth in the world refugee population, combined with a reduction in available funds for assistance.

"Since 1984, the world refugee population has grown from about 9 million to more than 15 million in 1990," said Hall. "Yet in that same period, U.S. support has dropped 22 percent."

Hall noted that Secretary of State James Baker had recently called for a $70 million supplemental to pay for the resettlement of 27,000 Soviet refugees in the United States. "Many members of Congress, in particular this member," said Hall, "believe that an additional $50 million should be added to the supplemental appropriations bill to address the urgent needs of the 15 million refugees in the Third World." Hall called it a "paradox of money resources" for $70 million to be requested for 27,000 refugees and zero dollars for 15 million refugees.

Government Witnesses Acknowledge Problem

The U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, Ambassador Jewel S. LaFontant, acknowledged that, given U.S. government budget constraints, "the amount of funding available for international assistance needs has not kept up with the increase in refugee numbers worldwide and the expanded requirements for both on-going programs and new emergency situations."

LaFontant said that the $70 million supplemental request would alleviate budget pressures this fiscal year, and that "depending on how refugee admissions proceed throughout the fiscal year, there may be some funding available for urgent refugee assistance needs." She said that there is still room in FY 90 to "draw down" on $50 million in the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) Fund and that the Administration would request an additional $47 million for the FY 91 budget for international refugee assistance.

Gerald Walzer, head of the program management service for UNHCR, said that his agency had to "drastically reduce" programs in all regions in 1989 due to the funding shortfall, and that austerity measures are being reinforced for 1990. Among the consequences of the cutbacks highlighted by Walzer are:

° the drying up of buffer stocks of emergency relief items for continuing refugee influxes;

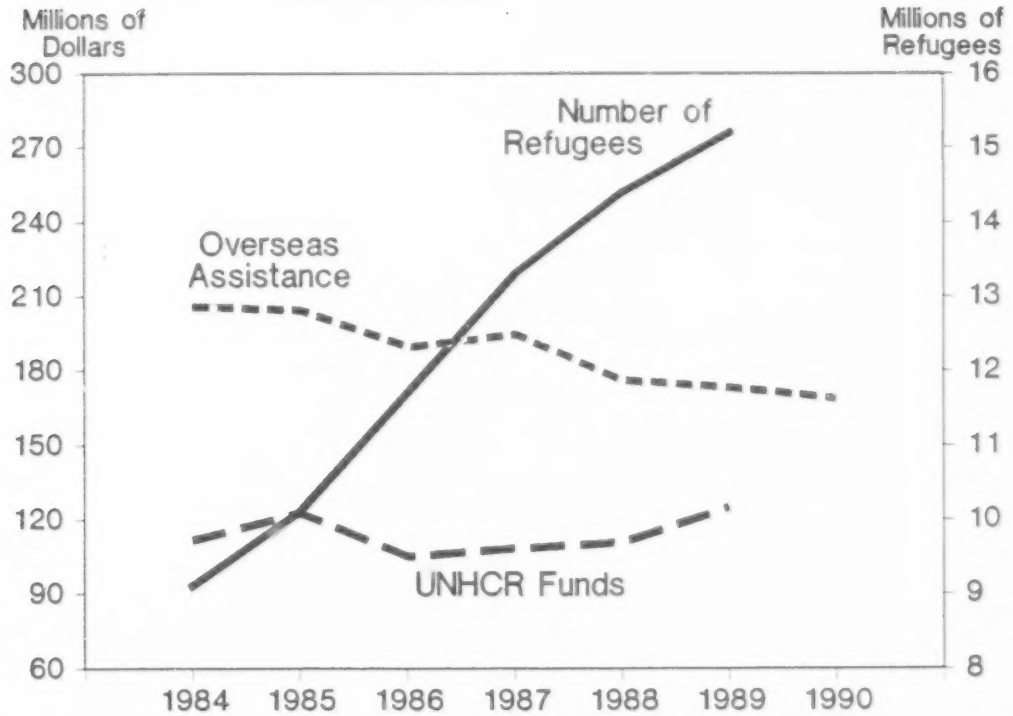
° reduction of infrastructural work, for example, water systems, so that refugees have access to less water and of lower quality;

° substantial cutbacks in construction of new educational facilities that "will result in fewer basic educational opportunities for refugee children";

° restricted distribution of basic relief items such as blankets, tents, heating and cooking fuel, etc.; and

° fewer resources for local settlement and income-generating activities.

More Refugees, Fewer Dollars



Overseas assistance funds from U.S. Migration & Refugee Account.
Source: House Select Committee on Hunger

USCR director Roger Winter provided details on the effect of UNHCR cutbacks on refugee lives, particularly in Africa. He said that 125,000 to 225,000 refugee children are today suffering from acute malnutrition, with malnutrition rates for children in some countries reaching 30 percent.

"Unless something is done now," said Winter, "1990 will be hell for refugees in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, and Malawi, simply based on inadequate resources at UNHCR and WFP." He said that UNHCR is "essentially taking no steps to prepare" for movement out of Ethiopia due to impending famine. "It simply doesn't have the money."

Winter asked why ERMA funds have not already been used by the State Department "to relieve the needs so obviously life-threatening and crippling." He speculated that they have been withheld to see if this year's "built-in shortfall of funds for refugee admissions" will be covered by a supplemental FY 1990 appropriation. He warned, "Any lag in utilizing ERMA fully has critical human costs" and said that these emergency funds "cannot justifiably be held in reserve until June or July to see if a supplemental for resettlement is enacted."

Winter said that a $50 million supplemental for assistance is needed in addition to the $70 million for resettlement. He proposed that the United States set two benchmarks for overseas refugee assistance: 1) per-capita support of refugees set at $25 annually, and 2) a 25 percent share of contributions to UNHCR and the other international humanitarian agencies assisting refugees.

PVOs PULLING OUT OF SUDAN

Several American and European agencies that have been working with refugees and displaced people in Sudan have ended or tempo-

rarily suspended their operations in that country and are withdrawing their personnel.

Aid workers in Sudan say that since the military took power in Sudan in June 1989, PVOs have found it increasingly difficult to carry out their operations. One European aid worker in Khartoum told Refugee Reports that, while it is normal to face some difficulties, "The Sudanese bureaucracy is making it impossible for us to operate." "We can not get visas or travel permits for our staff, we can't get diesel for our vehicles, and clearing goods from the port takes months--we have not been able to import any spare parts in 16 months."

The fact that PVOs and international organizations have to exchange dollars for local currency at a rate that is several times higher than the actual market rate has made implementing programs in Sudan very expensive. The same aid worker said, "It seems that this Sudanese government does not want us here."

Security is another concern. Several Western aid workers have been killed in recent incidents. At Khartoum airport, an aid worker who was on her way out of the country expressed concern about colleagues who remained behind. "The army confiscated all of our radio equipment," she told Refugee Reports. "Some of our staff members are still working in towns far from Khartoum--and we're not able to contact them. It's worrying."

U.S. BEGINS RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Last July, after years of unsuccessful negotiations, the United States and Vietnam reached an agreement to allow former reeducation camp detainees and their close family members to resettle in the United States. Interviewing began in October, and the first group of 190 people arrived on January 12 at San Francisco airport as part of the Special Released Reeducation Center Detainees Resettlement Program.

A total of about 1,000 political prisoners and their families arrived in January and February, according to U.S. government figures, and between 7,000 and 8,000 are expected to be resettled in FY 90. More than 90 percent of former prisoners and family members are resettled with refugee status, according to the State Department, with the remainder coming as immigrants or parolees.

There are about 130,000 applicants currently on file with the Orderly Departure Program (ODP) who may be eligible for the special detainee resettlement program, and Vietnamese government officials cite even higher figures.

But as this long-awaited population begins to enter American communities around the country, numerous questions are being asked by public and private service providers and the Vietnamese-American community: What do we know about the needs and expectations of these former prisoners? What plans and resources are being put in place for this group, and are these adequate? Questions are being raised about admissions ceilings and the use of nonrefugee status for detainees, as well.

As part of a process to develop appropriate resettlement strategies for former reeducation detainees, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) held a hearing on January 31 in Washington, DC, at which 24 commenters presented their views.

"There are a number of constituencies in the U.S. to whom the emigration of this special population is of great interest and concern," said Le Xuan Khoa, president of the Indochina Resource Action Center: "families and friends anticipating long-deferred reunions with their loved ones; state, county and other local governments, for whom these newcomers are both an asset and a challenge; voluntary agencies who will carry on their traditional task of reception and placement; Vietnamese mutual assistance and community associations, anxious to assist their countrymen and share the experience gained as they rebuilt their own lives in the U.S.; and the United States government, for whom the establishment of this program is the fulfillment of a historical and moral obligation."

Service providers--be they state and local governments, voluntary agencies or Vietnamese MAAs--"will expect adequate resources to do an adequate job," Khoa said.

Detainee Profiles Are Sketched Although comprehensive studies of reeducation camp detainees have not been conducted, profiles have been sketched. About 80 percent of the former detainees served in the South Viet-

namese military, according to records maintained by the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association (FVPPA), a nonprofit, Vietnamese community organization. Another 15 percent were civil servants and about 5 percent were religious leaders.

After being released from reeducation camps, detainees "were unable to get jobs, land, continue their education, or acquire housing" in Vietnam, said a FVPPA report.

Former prisoners have spent from 3 to 14 years in reeducation camps, and are typically in their mid-40s to mid-50s. The average family size is five people, and more than half have relatives in California.

In September 1989, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) released a study of 102 former reeducation camp prisoners done at the refugee processing center in the Philippines. In addition, ICMC conducted interviews with 5 former detainees in Ho Chi Minh City. According to the study,

> Reeducation camp detainees have had to deal with the trauma of imprisonment, both physically and emotionally. They were separated from their families for prolonged periods of time. They lost the legal status to hold jobs or to own property. They were forced to comply with routine accountability of their actions and movements with the local authorities. They were reduced to playing a secondary role in the everyday survival of their family. They look outside Vietnam, rather than inside it, for a future they have no control over.

While resettlement service providers are fearful of further stigmatizing the detainee population, most acknowledge that many detainees will have special health and mental health needs resulting from the trauma and deprivation of prison life, their generally unproductive roles in Vietnam following release, and the difficulty of adjusting to a new country while readjusting to long-separated family members.

Many former detainees have unrealistic expectations about the kinds of assistance they will be offered, according to service providers. Comments from recent arrivals indicate that some of the detainees expect such things as free housing and back pay for their period of imprisonment.

"Long isolation from economic and cultural activity has created an 'out-of-touch mentality for many, and re-entry must be carefully assisted," according to a statement at the ORR hearing by the Indochinese Mutual Assistance Association (IMAA) in San Diego. "Family separation may create a sense of alienation, and yet the family tie is a vital link in successful transition. In addition, there will be unrealistic expectations for quick success that will result in frustration.... These special problems will require immediate attention."

To meet the special needs of former prisoners, IMAA recommended the provision of "more extensive reception services; careful, personal orientation as well as group orientation; personal and family counseling; and health screening and services."

ORR Hopes to Give $1 Million in Special Funds Whatever the special needs of the detainee population, it appears that little additional federal funding will be available. The State Department has indicated that initial reception and placement grants to voluntary agencies will not be adjusted for detainee resettlement. The new director of ORR, Chris Gersten, has said that he expects ORR will make available about $1 million in FY 90 for special resettlement activities targeted to former prisoners.

Gersten's comments were made at a February 14 meeting of a working group convened by ORR to assess resettlement needs of former political prisoners. Participants in the working group include federal agencies, state coordinators, MAAs, voluntary agencies, and other specialists.

Recommendations of the working group are not expected to be available until the end of March, an ORR official told Refugee Reports. Some of the activities participants have recommended for ORR funding, the official said, include peer support and counseling, outreach, and orientation.

Gersten also said that the special ORR funds might be provided on a matching basis, in order to encourage contributions from states or local organizations. He was not referring to the voluntary agency matching grant program, an ORR source told Refugee Reports, although some of the resettlement agencies would like to channel more detainee cases through that program.

An InterAction statement at the ORR

hearing recommended that the "current matching grant program...be expanded for this group. This would allow the voluntary agencies to provide intensive up-front services for a longer period of time."

Since 1979, the matching grant program has provided federal funds of up to $1,000 per refugee to be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by voluntary agencies participating in the program.

"I am not sure the matching grant program will be appropriate," said Nguyen Nguyen, a consultant to the California state legislature's joint committee on refugee resettlement, international migration, and cooperative development. "The focus is on rapid employment, and many former prisoners may not be employable, given their age and traumatic experiences. Second, only four volags participate in the matching grant program. That's too exclusive."

Joan Pinchuk, refugee coordinator for Los Angeles county, has recommended that ORR make available its social services discretionary funds "for such purposes as mental health counseling and social adjustment services." Generally, ORR retains about 15 percent of social service funds for discretionary projects. In FY 90, ORR was allocated $75 million for refugee social services.

ORR officials declined to comment on this proposal. One said to Refugee Reports, "There are lots of hands out for that money."

InterAction Wants More Re-ed Refugee Numbers In a November 9 letter to Ambassador Princeton Lyman, director of the Bureau for Refugee Affairs, InterAction's Committee on Migration and Refugees called for the admission of 10,000 to 12,000 former prisoners and dependents in FY 90. "The number should be expanded to the greatest possible extent," said the letter, which was signed by Robert DeVecchi, committee chairman and executive director of the International Rescue Committee. "We should not have ex-detainees and their families waiting an additional four to five years to be resettled."

The State Department has said that, by April, it expects to be moving about 1,000 reeducation camp people per month out of Vietnam, but officials suggest that expansion beyond that figure is likely to be through immigrant, rather than refugee, channels. "We keep hoping that we will get 20,000 immigrants out of Vietnam per year," said Jim Williard of the Bureau for Refugee Programs. "That's 100,000 people in the next five years, and some portion will be re-ed cases."

"I'm not saying that [the detainee resettlement program] can't get bigger or that it won't get bigger," Williard told Refugee Reports. "But the program only started last month. We've got to give this a little time to see how it works."

INS DECREASES OVERCROWDING AT KROME DETENTION CENTER, BUT TENSIONS REMAIN

New parole guidelines, increased deportations, and transfers to other facilities have helped reduce the serious overcrowding at Krome North Service Processing Center, an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) detention center located near Miami, on the edge of the Florida Everglades.

Although tensions seem to have abated from the sky-high levels of mid-1989, a recent hunger strike by female detainees suggests that all is not yet well at Krome.

At the same time, questions--even lawsuits--have been raised about the manner in which the population was reduced, and the INS was found to have deported four Haitian women illegally, two of whom have been located in Haiti and returned to Krome to be placed into proper deportation proceedings.

Inmate Decline The total population of detainees at Krome has been greatly reduced since October, when there were 830 inmates. The total population was down to 509 in December, when Refugee Reports visited Krome, of whom 305 were Haitians. As of February 1, the census has been further reduced to 477.

Back in October, with a population nearly double the facility's maximum capacity, tensions were high among detainees, as well as INS personnel. "Guards who normally work 10 to 12 hour shifts were working 16 hours. Morale was low and staff turnover was high," said Esther Cruz, an attorney at Miami's Haitian Refugee Center (HRC).

Even detainees agree that after the overcrowding was eased, conditions at the

center improved. "Since some people were released, the officers are more relaxed," one detainee told Refugee Reports during the December visit.

Cheryl Little, another HRC attorney, agrees, but says that she's skeptical about how permanent the changes will be. "They know there's been a lot of criticism about Krome. Is this change real, or is it only something for the benefit of visitors?"

Transfers Since January 1989, the INS has been transferring Haitians to INS detention facilities and even county jails in Texas and Louisiana. Some of those who were transferred were accused by the INS of plotting a riot at the Krome facility. Detainees interviewed at Krome by Refugee Reports deny that any such thing was being planned. The effect, though, was to make those who were left behind more docile for fear of being branded as troublemakers and transferred or deported.

About 200 transferees were supposed to have been returned to Krome from locations in Texas and Louisiana by a class action suit brought by the Haitian Refugee Center last summer (see Refugee Reports, Vol. X, No. 8). Among other things, the suit alleged that the summary transfer violated their rights to legal representation.

Louisiana to Krome via Haiti But a wrong turn was taken for four of the detainees, who wound up having the INS put them on a flight to Port-au-Prince after having spent the previous days handcuffed and shackled on a bus ride from Louisiana to Miami.

Upon their return to Haiti, at least two of the would-have-been asylum seekers were arrested, shoved into a station wagon, and sent to the notorious Recherches Criminelles (Criminal Research, also known as the Anti-Gang Investigations Unit) detention center, which has frequently been cited by Amnesty International, Americas Watch and other human rights monitors for torturing and killing detainees.

There the two women, Medila Meus and Huguette Liberus, were kept in a small, windowless cell for three days with no beds, mattress, or sink. During that time, they were denied food and water. "We thought we might be killed," Meus told the Miami Herald after her return to Krome. "Nobody knows what may happen at Criminal Research."

Cheryl Little told Refugee Reports that she had been tracking INS compliance with the June 30 class action settlement, calling INS facilities in Louisiana and Texas every day to learn who was being sent back to Krome. She said she knew something was wrong when the women she knew to have left Louisiana never arrived at their intended destination. The INS conceded the mistake and consented to fly them back to put them into legal deportation proceedings again. They remain in Krome, and were participants in the recently held hunger strike.

Little said that they would now be able to file for political asylum to fight the deportation order. Meus says that she left Haiti after her brother and uncle were killed by the military. She originally arrived by boat, after a 15-day voyage in which she said she nearly drowned. Liberus said that someone had shot at her home, and that a bullet hit her bed. She was threatened for having worked for a particular priest, she said.

The other two women erroneously deported to Haiti have not been located.

Deportations In all, 859 Haitians were deported, excluded, or required to depart in FY 89, and another 286 have been removed in FY 90, through January. This does not include interdictions (numbering 4,489 in FY 89, the largest fiscal year total since interdiction began in 1981) nor Haitians at airports transiting without visas (TWOVs), who numbered 4,272 in FY 89. A total of 82 Haitian cases were denied asylum (a case can represent more than one individual) in FY 89; three cases were approved. A total of 707 asylum cases were pending at the end of the fiscal year. Since 1983, the cumulative approval rate for Haitian asylum seekers has been 2.1 percent.

November Parole Policy Results in More Releases from Krome On November 1, Acting INS District Director Richard B. Smith issued an interim directive setting a temporary cap of 400 detainees for the Krome facility, citing budget constraints.

The directive said that aliens in exclusion proceedings would be considered for parole with priority going to noncriminal aliens based on length of detention and with family relatives in the United States

who had submitted affidavits of support on their behalf. But, the directive added that "aliens who have final orders of exclusion and/or deportation or whose case is on appeal, will not be paroled without the approval of the District Director."

According to Little, Smith told the Haitian Refugee Center on February 13 that 138 Haitians had been paroled since the new policy went into effect November 1.

However, Little points out that most of the longer-term detainees remain because their cases are on appeal. In a letter to Smith following the November 1 announcement, Little wrote, "It is fundamentally unfair to punish [people] and deny them parole simply because their cases are on appeal. Moreover, if paroled, these individuals would be in a far better position to secure adequate legal representation."

Richard Walker, then Acting Director of the Krome facility, told Refugee Reports that the new parole policy announced on November 1 "is just a slight variance [of the established parole process] in order to accommodate the situation at the time." Walker added, "as the population decreases, we will go back to the original parole process."

Allegations of Bias, Harassment Persist

The three-day hunger strike in February indicates that tensions have not entirely abated with reduced numbers. The hunger strikers alleged a number of acts of harassment and heavy-handedness by Krome guards. These included allegations that they were confined to their quarters, and denied access to telephones and use of the television.

The pattern is familiar to those who have followed events at Krome during the past year. Little provided Refugee Reports with more than a pound of sworn affidavits from Haitian detainees at Krome taken in 1989. Their complaints include: being confined to their dormitories for long periods of time; severe limitations on access to bathrooms and telephones; solitary confinement for long periods; and verbal and physical abuse by INS guards.

Former and current detainees voiced similar complaints to Refugee Reports at the time of the December visit. "We left Haiti because we were being abused by the military," a former detainee said. "But we came here to Krome, and I have have seen officers beat the detainees with my own eyes."

Another Haitian said, "They treat the other nationalities better than us. If there is a misunderstanding between a Haitian and another nationality, then they [the guards] will punish the Haitian person. If another person is sick, they go to the clinic right away, but not the Haitians."

Refugee Reports asked one of the Haitians if he had encountered any problems at Krome. "For myself, I haven't had any problems," he told us. But then he recounted what happened the day he was due to be deported--but resisted: "I did not want to go back. When we got to the airport, I refused to go. They mistreated me a lot then. They handcuffed my hands behind my back and pushed my body from behind against the van, and the handcuffs were so hard on my legs [his legs were also shackled] that I couldn't lift my legs to get into the van--but he [the guard] pushed me hard into the van, and I fell so hard against the chair that I hurt my chest."

Walker denies that Haitians are discriminated against. "I don't think it's true, and if anyone is saying it, I think it's unfounded," he told Refugee Reports. "I think a lot of them [Haitians] are taking the official restrictions as a personal affront to them," Walker added.

Current Research

HAITIAN INTERDICTION VIOLATES INTERNATIONAL LAW, LAWYERS GROUP FINDS

At a recent congressional hearing on hunger (see related article, p. 5), the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, Ambassador Jewel S. LaFontant, was asked about the Haitian interdiction operation. "We have heard heavy criticism on this," said Ambassador LaFontant. It was a matter of "common sense," she said, that the interdiction policy be reviewed. She said that an interagency task force had embarked on such a review, and announced that its recommendations should be out "in short order."

Of particular use to government policy makers will be a 108-page report issued on February 14 by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. Based on two site visits to

Haiti in 1989, the report makes a convincing case that "at least hundreds of refugees have been wrongfully returned to Haiti over the course of the program and denied protection in violation of refugee law."

Refugee Refoulement: The Forced Return of Haitians under the U.S.-Haitian Interdiction Agreement finds that of the 21,461 Haitians interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard since the program began in 1981, only 6 persons have been allowed to enter the United States to pursue asylum claims. Of those six persons, two had lived in the United States before and three were relatively well-educated teachers, factors that may have helped them to articulate their claims.

Through the Lawyers Committee report, a picture emerges about at least some of the remaining 21,461--those denied, characterized as "economic migrants", and returned to Haiti.

Shipboard Interviews The Lawyers Committee was permitted to review on a confidential basis the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) questionnaires used to interview a boatload of 182 Haitians interdicted and returned to Port-au-Prince on March 31, 1989. Although INS examiners had told the Lawyers Committee team that they ask 17 questions in one-on-one interviews, including questions about imprisonment, mistreatment, political involvement, and restrictions on freedom, the questionnaires only reflect the first six questions: Name? Birthplace? Birthday? Current Address? Occupation? and "Why did you leave Haiti?"

A sampling of the answers written down by the INS interviewer in response to the question "Why did you leave Haiti?" include:

> "People are dying"; "to save my life"; "people are being burned; cannot live"; "people are dying and being burned, people are being robbed"; mother's house burned, got beat up for no reason"; "lost two kids by gunfire, brother-in-law killed"; "people being set on fire, cannot return to Port-au-Prince, lost three brothers, spent three years in prison for nothing."

The report observes, "Although the [INS] guidelines provide for a private interview if there is any indication of a refugee claim, unequivocal statements by the Haitians of fear of return to Haiti were apparently disregarded."

It goes on to say, "Despite these alarming answers, no further amplification or clarification is noted, and all were summarily returned to Haiti on April 2."

Interviews of Returnees The Lawyers Committee also interviewed Haitian returnees, and published the accounts of several with strong refugee claims who were returned nevertheless. Among them was Mr. Philogene, a passenger on the same ship from which the above INS interview notes were taken.

Philogene told the Lawyers Committee that he had been the vice president of the Communal Electoral Bureau, established to monitor the November 1987 elections (elections which were cancelled and in which people standing in line to cast their ballots were massacred). Seven days after the aborted elections, Philogene, his wife, and three children were arrested by the Haitian authorities. Shortly after his release, he learned that the authorities were planning to arrest him again, and went into hiding. In 1988, he became involved in a movement to defend peasant rights, organizing a demonstration to protest the arrest of a peasant leader. In March 1989, learning that the authorities wanted to arrest him again because of his activities with the peasants, he decided to leave the country.

The report recounts what Philogene said happened after his boat was interdicted by the Coast Guard:

> Their boat was sunk and they were told that they would be brought to Miami. While on board the Coast Guard's cutter, the Haitians were asked as a group by the INS officer and his interpreter why they had left Haiti. Mr. Philogene told them that he had left because he did not feel safe in Haiti, and wanted to ask for asylum in the United States. The INS officer ignored him and went on to the next person. He was returned to Haiti along with the other passengers on the boat.

After being returned to Haiti, Philogene moved in with relatives in another town, telling the Lawyers Committee that he was afraid to return to his hometown. He has discontinued his work for peasant rights.

See No Evil, Hear No Evil Until 1986, occasional follow-up interviews were conducted by U.S. embassy personnel in Haiti to ascertain whether returnees were ill-treated. A U.S. embassy official in Port-au-Prince told the Lawyers Committee delegation that only a very small percentage of returnees was actually interviewed because of the difficulty in locating them.

Follow-up interviews were discontinued entirely after President Duvalier's overthrow in early 1986. The Embassy sent a cable to Washington saying, "any legitimate expectation that persecution might occur based on the general character of the Haitian governemnt was removed when the National Governing Council succeeded President Jean-Claude Duvalier on February 7 and immediately made several key changes in the government of Haiti's human rights policy, most notably the dissolution of the Tonton Macoutes militia. This development and past findings make continuation of the program unjustifiable on principle." Follow-up interviews were never resumed.

Notwithstanding the U.S. embassy cable, human rights violations did resume shortly after Duvalier's overthrow, according to several human rights groups. Those violations have been documented in such reports as Haiti: Duvalierism since Duvalier (October 1986); Haiti: Terror and the 1987 Elections (November 1987); and The More Things Change ...Human Rights in Haiti (February 1989), by Americas Watch, the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, and Caribbean Rights.

Recently, on February 20, the House of Representatives passed a resolution (H. Con. Res. 250) saying that the U.S. Congress:

> condemns the military Government of Haiti for its arrests, beatings, and forced exile of opposition leaders, its abridgement of civil and political rights for Haitian citizens, and its blatant disregard for the Haitian Constitution and International law.

Refugee Refoulement is available from the Refugee Project of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 330 Seventh Avenue, 10th floor, New York, NY 10001. (212) 629-6170.

Projects and Programs

SCORR LINKS STATE REFUGEE COORDINATORS

"The State Coordinators of Refugee Resettlement (SCORR) join together to establish and enhance individual professional development; to coordinate and thereby eliminate gaps in information dissemination; to promote improved service delivery...[and] to advise and inform and thereby to facilitate responsive planning within the federal government."

Thus reads the mission statement of SCORR, an organization formed by state refugee coordinators in 1988. Representatives of 41 states have joined SCORR. Because SCORR does not have any funds or staff, all of the organization's work is done by members on a volunteer basis. SCORR board members "meet" by telephone on regular conference calls.

According to Maryland's refugee coordinator, Frank Bien, "Developing a system to better share information among states is one of the organization's main objectives." Bien says that states can then use the information to take more informed positions on issues.

Citing an example of SCORR's information-sharing function, SCORR's president, California Refugee Program Manager Walter Barnes, said, "This past year we assessed the potential impact of various budget alternatives that the Administration and Congress were considering for 1990, then provided that information to states for their use."

One of the issues that first brought SCORR members together was their common concerns over a significant change in the pattern of refugee resettlement nationwide. "Basically, a few states were receiving more and more refugees," says Barnes, "and, conversely, many states were receiving fewer refugees than they had in the past. States receiving less refugees were afraid that they would not receive enough refugees to keep their programs viable, while over-impacted states were worried that their resources would be stretched too thin."

Laurie Bagan, Colorado's refugee coordinator, adds that "many of the state

coordinators feel that it's important that the refugee resettlement program remain a national program." "If most refugees are concentrated in only a few states," says Bagan, "their problems and concerns will not be the concerns of the nation as a whole." According to Barnes, SCORR has met with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the U.S. State Department, and InterAction, to encourage them to work with SCORR on this issue.

SCORR has held two meetings coinciding with national ORR meeting. "ORR has been very supportive," says Barnes. "They have expressed interest in our activities and have invited us to speak at their annual meetings." "It's a very positive relationship," adds Bien.

Reader Exchange

° "Refugees: Facing Crisis in the 1990s" is the topic of the Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Law Project 1990 Symposium, to be held at Yale Law School, New Haven, Connecticut, April 6-7, 1990.

Panel discussions will include "Proactive Approaches to Refugee Crises," "Human Rights Protection and Refugee Relief," and "Forced Repatriation in Southeast Asia." Presentations will also be held on "Push-backs and Human Rights" and "Relief Agendas and the Refugee's Welfare: The Horn of Africa." Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, coordinator of UN assistance programs relating to Afghanistan, will present the keynote address.

For information, contact Christopher P. Gilkerson, Lowenstein Project, Yale Law School, 401A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520. (203) 562-5085.

° The United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) is recruiting a full-time psychiatrist to develop comprehensive mental health services and training for Cambodian refugees on the Thai border. This is a historic opportunity to implement a first-of-its-kind UN mental health project. Other mental health practitioners such as psychiatrists and social workers are also needed.

Persons interested should send resumes to Mr. Patrick A.J. van de Velde, deputy director, United Nations Border Relief Operation, United Nations Building, Rajadamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand. Telephone: (66) 2-282-9161. Fax: (66) 2-280-3479. For information in the United States, contact Richard F. Mollica, M.D., chairman, Committee on Refugees and Migrants, World Federation for Mental Health, Indochinese Psychiatry Clinic, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, 77 Warren Street, Brighton, MA 02135. (617) 782-6711.

A recent report for UNBRO prepared by the World Federation for Mental Health and the Harvard School of Public Health Task Force on the Mental Health Crisis in Site Two outlined the urgent need for establishing a mental health program in the camp. Copies of the report are available free of charge, by contacting Dr. Mollica.

Resources

HANDBOOK HELPS MAAs LEARN FUNDRAISING TECHNIQUES

"A great number of manuals have been written about fund-raising and resource development," says Le Xuan Khoa, president of the Indochina Refugee Action Center. "But none of these is specifically prepared for refugee organizations, better known as Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), many of which have been dependent on one single source of funding: the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)."

According to Khoa, because the future of that ORR funding is uncertain, MAAs need to find new resources to ensure that their work continues.

The Resource Development Handbook, produced by IRAC with funding from ORR, gives MAAs a comprehensive guide for organizing their fundraising approach.

The two-hundred page manual outlines the resource development process: strategic planning, public relations, fundraising workplan, and proposal writing. It describes how to tap resources available from the private and public sectors, as well as individuals. Also included are practical worksheets, and an annotated bibliography.

ORR distributed the first printing of the handbook widely, without cost, to MAA directors around the United States. A second printing, done by IRAC, is now

available for $22.50. To order, contact the Indochina Resource Action Center, 1628 16th St. NW, 3rd floor, Washington, DC 20009. (202) 667-4690. Special bulk rates are available.

HEARTS OF SORROW: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES TELL THEIR OWN STORIES

James Freeman, a professor of anthropology at San Jose State University, has spent the last six years compiling the life stories of fourteen refugees in Hearts of Sorrow: Vietnamese-American Lives. "This book is about the end of an era," he says, "a world lost, a way of life that exists now only in memory."

Freeman decided to compile these first-person narratives because of the stereotypes being applied to Indochinese refugees in Santa Clara, California, where he teaches and lives.

"As I came to know Vietnamese refugees in the Santa Clara Valley, I heard increasing complaints that most reporting about them remained erroneous, misleading, and demeaning," he says. Vietnamese-Americans in the Valley were dismayed to be called "welfare sponges, or persons who take jobs away from others." They resented media emphasis on criminal gangs, as well as insinuations that they had used unfair means to become successful in business or in buying homes.

"Because of these complaints," says Freeman, "I designed this book, in which Vietnamese-American people could express themselves in their own terms about subjects they considered important and wanted other Americans to hear."

The fourteen refugees who tell their stories include a young survivor of a massacre, a school teacher, a Buddhist nun, an elderly civil servant, an auto mechanic, and two former military officers.

Rather than telling one story at a time, Freeman has divided the narratives into thematic segments such as "Vietnam: Childhood, Youth, and Character"; "Flight to Freedom"; and "America: Heartache Beneath Success."

The 446-page book is available at bookstores, or from Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, for $29.50.

Below are excerpts from Hearts of Sorrow.

°Three times a week for three months, we took the boat out to sea and did some fishing.... The Patrols became accustomed to our boat, and when we did leave for good, they did not question us.

On the night of June 12, 1979, I was sleeping on the boat, as I often did, when my older brother came to tell me to go right home.... When I arrived, my mother, brother, and sister were sitting in the backyard, illuminated by the light of a large full moon. [My mother] told me I would be leaving Vietnam the next day.... I was taken aback.... Now that the day had come, I could not believe it.

I now understand what that day was to mean to me, though at the time it did not cross my mind. Now that I have left, I fully realize that my family, home, and country probably are behind me forever. This is a source of sadness that is with me always.

--young survivor of a massacre

° My family living in America has everything complete and happy, and a new chance.

But the children are different here in America.... Children growing up in Vietnam are afraid of their parents. Even when they marry, they still have respect and fear of their parents. In America, when they become 18, they lose their fear. They depend on the law of the land and go out of the house....

There's a second important point. Vietnamese life is not like American life. The Vietnamese have villages, neighbors, and sentiment. The father-child and mother-child relationships last forever, until the parents are very old. Children have the duty to take care of their parents.... This is not like in America, where adult children leave the home and old parents go to the nursing home. I'd like Americans to know that. I have met and talked with a lot of old American people. They have said to me, "When we become sick, nobody knows. When the postman comes...only then does somebody know we are sick."

LEGALIZATION APPLICANTS (I-687)
As of January 9, 1990

COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP*			STATE OF RESIDENCE*		
All Countries	1,768,300	100.0%	Total U.S.	1,768,300	100.0%
Mexico	1,235,200	69.9%	California	963,400	54.5%
El Salvador	143,700	8.1%	Texas	313,200	17.7%
Guatemala	52,800	3.0%	Illinois	121,800	6.9%
Colombia	26,500	1.5%	New York	119,800	6.8%
Philippines	19,200	1.1%	Florida	49,400	2.8%
Dominican Rep.	18,400	1.0%	Arizona	29,000	1.6%
Nicaragua	16,100	.9%	New Jersey	28,700	1.6%
Poland	16,100	.9%	New Mexico	16,600	.9%
Haiti	16,000	.9%	Nevada	10,400	.6%
Iran	14,700	.8%	Colorado	10,100	.6%
Other	209,600	11.9%	Other	105,900	6.0%

*Estimated and rounded to the nearest hundred.
Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

REFUGEE REPORTS is published monthly for $35.00 per year for one subscription, $25.00 each for two or more subscriptions to the same addressee, or $25.00 each for ten or more subscriptions requested at the same time, mailed to separate addresses; overseas postage is an additional $24.00 for second class or an additional $75.00 for airmail; by ACNS, 95 Madison Avenue, Third Floor, New York, NY 10016. Second Class Postage paid at New York and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Refugee Reports*, Sunbelt Fulfillment Services, P.O. Box 41094, Nashville, TN 37204.

Editorial comments and inquiries should be sent to: *Refugee Reports*, 1025 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 920, Washington, DC 20005. All communications regarding subscriptions should be sent to: *Refugee Reports* Subscriptions, Sunbelt Fulfillment Services, P.O. Box 41094, Nashville, TN 37204. (615) 377-3322.

Basic subscription rate for 12 issues per year: $35.00; Multiple-copy rate: $25.00; Single copies of back issues: $3.00
Editor: Virginia Hamilton; Staff Writers: Bill Frelick, Court Robinson, and Hiram A. Ruiz
Distribution Manager: Carolyn Moore; Production Coordinator: Koula Papanicolas
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Refugee Reports

A News Service of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, a Project of the American Council for Nationalities Service
Sunbelt Fulfillment Services
P.O. Box 41094
Nashville, TN 37204

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